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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3445  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GABORONE 005380

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SUBJECT: THE NEW LOOK OF SADC--PRESIDENCY PLANS  
AMBITIOUS RESTRUCTURING

REF: GABORONE 4211

CLASSIFIED BY DCM SCOTT DELISI. REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. THE SECRETARY'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO SADC TRAVELED OCTOBER 11-13 TO MOZAMBIQUE TO CONSULT WITH GOM OFFICIALS ON SADC MATTERS AND PARTICULARLY ON MOZAMBIQUE'S ROLE AS CURRENT SADC PRESIDENT. FONMIN SIMAO AND OTHER GOM OFFICIALS SHARED THEIR AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR RESTRUCTURING THE ORGANIZATION. THEY WERE DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE OF USG ENGAGEMENT WITH SADC AND RESPONSIVE TO OUR CONCERNS THAT RESTRUCTURING NOT LEAD TO A LESS ACCESSIBLE OR LESS EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION. THE MINISTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE SADC SUMMIT'S RECENT DISMISSAL OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (REFTEL) DOES NOT NECESSARILY PRESAGE AN EFFORT TO PARE BACK THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARIAT (AS INITIALLY FEARED). TO THE CONTRARY, HE SUGGESTED TO US THAT THE SECRETARIAT AND ITS NEW (YET-TO-BE-APPOINTED) SENIOR EXECUTIVE COULD ULTIMATELY BE GIVEN BROADER POWERS THAN THOSE THEY CURRENTLY HOLD. THE GOM IS PROCEEDING SYTEMATICALLY WITH ITS APPROACH TO RESTRUCTURING AND IS CONSULTING CLOSELY WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS AND WITH THE SADC SECRETARIAT. THE PROCESS WILL LIKELY BE A LONGER, AND MORE DIFFICULT, ONE THAN THE GOM ANTICIPATES. NONETHELESS, IF THE MOZAMBIKAN PRESIDENCY CAN SEE ITS AMBITIOUS AGENDA THROUGH TO A CONCLUSION--AND CONVINCE OTHER MEMBER STATES TO SHARE ITS VISION--THE END RESULT COULD WELL PRODUCE A MORE FOCUSED AND EFFECTIVE INSTITUTION. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) AMBASSADOR ROBERT KRUEGER, US AMBASSADOR TO BOTSWANA AND THE SECRETARY'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC), ACCOMPANIED BY EMBASSY GABORONE DCM SCOTT DELISI, TRAVELED TO MOZAMBIQUE OCTOBER 11-13. THERE THEY JOINED AMBASSADOR DEAN CURRAN, EMBASSY MAPUTO DCM ROBERT LOFTIS AND POLOFF FERGUSON-AUGUSTUS, FOR A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH SENIOR GOM OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS A RANGE OF SADC-RELATED ISSUES. EMBASSY MAPUTO WILL REPORT SEPARATELY ON MOZAMBIQUE'S VIEWS ON THE TRADE PROTOCOL AND ON FONMIN SIMAO'S COMMENTS ON THE CONFLICT IN THE DROC AND MOZAMBIQUE'S ROLE--AS NEW PRESIDENT OF SADC--IN TRYING TO RESOLVE THAT CONFLICT. IN MEETINGS WITH SIMAO, HOWEVER, AND WITH MFA DIRECTOR FOR MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND SADC NATIONAL POINT OF CONTACT BELMIRO MALATE, WE OBTAINED A CLEARER PICTURE OF MOZAMBIQUE'S VISION FOR A RESTRUCTURED SADC AND OF THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH THIS MIGHT BE ACHIEVED.

¶3. (C) AS A STARTING POINT, BOTH SIMAO AND MALATE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE RESTRUCTURING WOULD TAKE A BROAD-BASED LOOK AT SADC, AND WOULD BEGIN WITH A RESTRUCTURING OF THE INSTITUTION'S AGENDA ITSELF. MALATE NOTED THAT TO THIS POINT SADC HAS FOCUSED ON A RANGE OF DIFFERENT SECTORAL ACTIVITIES (E.G. ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, TOURISM, ETC.) WHICH HAD NEITHER VISIBLE INTERCONNECTIVITY NOR ANY MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE GOALS. SADC MEMBER STATES, HE ARGUED, MUST FIRST AGREE UPON AN IDENTIFIED SET OF PRIORITY GOALS AND THEN REASSESS ACTIVITIES IN EACH SECTOR TO ENSURE THAT SECTORAL PROGRAMS SUPPORTED AND ADVANCED THE BROADER INSTITUTIONAL GOALS.

14. (C) THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THE GOM WAS PREPARING A PAPER FOR DISCUSSION BY MEMBER STATES WHICH COULD LEAD TO DEFINITION OF SADC'S NEW AGENDA AND GOALS. THE SECRETARIAT IN GABORONE REPORTS AS WELL THAT IT HAS BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE GOM, PROVIDING VARIOUS POSITION PAPERS ON SADC STRUCTURAL ISSUES. ALTHOUGH THE SECRETARIAT REMAINS CAUTIOUS GIVEN THAT ITS PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS ON RESTRUCTURING WERE REJECTED BY THE SADC SUMMIT IN MAURITIUS IN SEPTEMBER 1998 IT HAS APPARENTLY OFFERED THE PRESIDENCY SOME OF THE SAME PROPOSALS FOR A MORE TIGHTLY STRUCTURED ORGANIZATION. ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTER SIMAO, THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PAPER WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A "SEMINAR" AT WHICH MEMBER STATES WILL JOIN WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF REGIONAL THINK TANKS, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, AND OTHERS TO DISCUSS THE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE RESTRUCTURED SADC.

15. (C) BOTH SIMAO AND MALATE WERE RESPONSIVE TO OUR CONCERNS THAT IN THE PROCESS OF RESTRUCTURING SADC NOT LOSE ITS INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY. THERE MUST, WE COMMENTED, BE AN INSTITUTIONAL ENTITY CAPABLE OF REPRESENTING SADC EFFECTIVELY IN ITS INTERACTIONS WITH DONORS, INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHERS. MOREOVER, WE URGED THAT RESTRUCTURING ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEED FOR CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES FOR THE SECRETARIAT, THE PRESIDENCY, SECTORAL COORDINATING UNITS AND MEMBER STATES AND ESTABLISHED LINES OF AUTHORITY BETWEEN THEM. SIMAO AGREED, NOTING THAT THE CHALLENGE HAS BEEN IN PART THAT THE MEMBER STATES HAVE NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THIS SORT OF PARTNERSHIP WITH EACH OTHER OR WITH OUTSIDERS. AT PRESENT, HE URGED US TO CONTINUE OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH SADC ACROSS AS BROAD A FRONT AS POSSIBLE--WITH THE SECRETARIAT, WITH HIM AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE MINISTERS, AND WITH SECTORAL COORDINATORS. HE ADVISED THAT WE "KEEP LOOSE" AND NOT FIX RIGID APPROACHES TO SADC AT PRESENT BUT PROMISED THAT A DEFINED STRUCTURE WAS COMING.

16. (C) IN REASSESSING SADC'S STRUCTURE ALONG WITH ITS AGENDA SIMAO AND MALATE BOTH HINTED THAT THEY ENVISIONED A STRONGER SECRETARIAT, POSSIBLY CREATING A SECRETARY GENERAL POSITION TO REPLACE THE RECENTLY DISMISSED EXECUTIVE SECRETARY. SIMAO NOTED THAT ORIGINALLY SADC MEMBER STATES HAD WANTED TO AVOID CREATION OF A LARGE SECRETARIAT WITH A POTENTIALLY COSTLY BUREAUCRACY THAT WOULD DRAIN FUNDS AWAY FROM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES. EQUALLY, HE ACKNOWLEDGED, MEMBER STATES FEARED AN OVERLY STRONG SECRETARIAT WOULD REDUCE THE ROLE FOR MEMBER STATES. NOW, HOWEVER, HE SAID SADC MUST RE-EXAMINE THE QUESTION OF THE LEVEL OF EMPOWERMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT. MALATE HAD ALSO OBSERVED EARLIER IN THE DAY THAT IN THE PROCESS SADC MUST ALSO MORE CLEARLY ADDRESS THE INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE SECRETARIAT AND THE PRESIDENCY. HE FELT THAT CLOSER TIES WERE NEEDED AND NOTED THAT UNDER THE GOM THE PRESIDENCY WAS ALREADY MORE CLOSELY ENGAGED WITH THE SECRETARIAT.

17. (C) A SIMILAR PROCESS OF REDEFINITION WILL CONTINUE WITH THE ORGAN FOR POLITICS, DEFENSE AND SECURITY, THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF WHICH IS CURRENTLY HELD BY ZIMBABWE. AS HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY EMBASSY MBABANE, MALATE NOTED THAT THE MEETING OF THE INTERSTATE DEFENSE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE IN MBABANE AT THE END OF THE MONTH WOULD HOPEFULLY LEAD TO A MORE PRECISELY DEFINED ROLE FOR THE ORGAN AND GREATER CLARITY CONCERNING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENCY. MALATE NOTED THAT THE MEETING WOULD LIKELY BE BROADER THAN THE NORMAL ISDSC GATHERINGS AND WOULD INCLUDE NOT ONLY MILITARY CHIEFS AND DEFENSE MINISTERS BUT REPRESENTATIVES FROM FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERIOR, OR OTHER NATIONAL MINISTRIES DEALING WITH POLITICAL, DEFENSE OR SECURITY ISSUES. HE HOPED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS MIGHT LEAD TO A RESTRUCTURING OF THE AGENDA FOR THE ORGAN SIMILAR TO THAT PLANNED FOR SADC AS A WHOLE. HE NOTED THAT A SOUTH AFRICAN NGO, ACCORD, HAD BEEN SELECTED TO CONDUCT A SEMINAR TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT THE APPROPRIATE ROLE FOR THE ORGAN.

18. (C) SIMAO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE RESTRUCTURING PROCESS WOULD BE TIME CONSUMING AND MIGHT NOT BE FULLY COMPLETED PRIOR TO THE END OF MOZAMBIQUE'S ONE YEAR IN THE PRESIDENCY (OF WHICH 10 MONTHS REMAIN). ALMOST CERTAINLY, THE PROCESS WILL NOT BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE 6-MONTH TIMEFRAME MANDATED BY THE MAPUTO SUMMIT IN AUGUST. SIMAO HOPED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY WELL LAUNCHED THAT MOZAMBIQUE'S SUCCESSOR IN THE PRESIDENCY, NAMIBIA, WOULD BRING IT TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION IF NECESSARY. HE INFORMED US, HOWEVER, THAT IN THE INTERIM, HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE PROCEEDING WITH EFFORTS TO SELECT A NEW SENIOR EXECUTIVE FOR SADC. HE THOUGHT THAT THE ACTING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, DR. PREGA RAMSAMY, WOULD LIKELY BE LEFT IN THAT ROLE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS BOTH SADC'S AGENDA AND THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARIAT AND ITS LEADERSHIP HAD BEEN FULLY REVIEWED.

19. (C) COMMENT: THE APPROACH PROPOSED BY SIMAO AND MALATE REFLECTS THE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE WITH WHICH THEY TAKE MOZAMBIQUE'S ROLE AS SADC'S PRESIDENT. HOWEVER, WHILE OTHER MEMBER STATES AGREE THAT STRUCTURAL REFORM OF SADC IS NECESSARY, WHETHER THEY WILL ALSO ULTIMATELY SHARE MOZAMBIQUE'S VISION OF WHAT FORM THAT REFORM SHOULD TAKE REMAINS TO BE SEEN. MEANWHILE, THE PROCESS OUTLINED BY SIMAO WILL LIKELY BE TIME CONSUMING, POTENTIALLY COSTLY, AND MORE EASILY CONCEPTUALIZED THAN IMPLEMENTED. MOZAMBIQUE, AS SADC PRESIDENT, MUST ALSO BE ABLE TO MARSHALL THE RESOURCES TO OVERCOME THE BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES AND LOGISTICAL LOGJAMS THAT WILL ACCOMPANY THIS EFFORT TO ENSURE A BROAD POLICY DIALOGUE. WE WILL WANT TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS AS BEST WE CAN IN HOPES THAT SADC WILL EMERGE A MORE FOCUSED AND MORE EFFECTIVE INSTITUTION. THE REAL WORK, HOWEVER, WILL REST WITH THE SADC MEMBER STATES. WE HOPE THEY ARE UP TO THE TASK.

KRUEGER